

Child and Family Services Update

January 2008

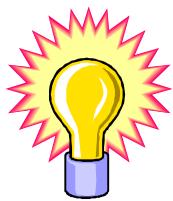
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Please share your thoughts and ideas by sending them to Carol Miller at CAROLMILLER@utah.gov

Betournay's Bits

By Duane Betournay, Director



Get Involved

It's that time of year....No, not the time to take down the garland and put away the Christmas tree for another year. It's time for the legislature. At the state office, this time of year brings with it a buzz of activity aimed at the proceeding that carry with them the potential for good and bad. Between preparing budget presentations, tracking bills, and talking with staffers and legislators the pace is often hectic. Hectic enough that there is no way that we can get to each and every legislator, address every single issue, and spread the word of the positive work of the Division. That is where your participation in the process is critical. You might ask: How can I help? How can I get involved and what possible impact can I have? My response is that you can contribute more than you think. Here are a couple of practical things that you can do in that pursuit.

Become Aware

This can start simply with just knowing who your legislator is. You can find that out by visiting the Legislative website at <http://le.utah.gov>.

While there, you may also want to spend some time learning about the legislative process. Now if you're like me and it has been a few years since your Civics 101 class, you can familiarize yourself with the legislative process including law making and fiscal appropriations. You can research bills that are being sponsored during the legislative session. Each bill that winds its way through the legislative process has a sponsor in both houses. Knowledge of these bills and the potential impact that the proposed law may have on you or your family provides you with an opportunity to speak with your legislator about how you feel about the potential impact. Your legislator may or may not be the sponsor of the bill, but they will have some opportunity to weigh in on the public policy questions that are being asked of them. They will have to vote at some point

to either support the bill or not. This provides you, their constituent, with an opportunity to educate them and their colleagues about the potential impact and many times, this education is vital to their understanding. You would be surprised to know that often, with critical decision making hanging in the balance, they receive very little feedback from their constituents.

Bills of Interest

Here are a few bills and their sponsors that may be of interest and warrant your further study. HB indicates a House Bill and SB denotes a Senate Bill.

- HB33 Immunity Amendments, Representative Gregory Hughes
- SB17 Child Abuse and Neglect Registry, Senator Gene Davis
- HB35 Child Welfare Amendments, Representative Wayne Harper
- HB31 Child Welfare Definitions, Representative Wayne Harper
- HB45 Supported Employment for People with Disabilities, Representative Ronda Menlove
- SB50 Medical Benefits Recovery, Senator Allen Christensen
- SB63 Adult Protective Services Amendments, Senator Kevin VanTassell
- SB122 Uniform Adult Guardianship, Senator Lyle Hillard
- HB122 Driver's License for Minor, Representative David Litvack
- HB38 Limited Immunity for Pregnant Women, Representative Ronda Menlove
- HB34 Email Information Required of Registered Sex Offenders, Representative Jim Bird
- SB106 Juvenile Custody Maintenance Amendments, Senator Darin Peterson
- HB316 Substance Abuse Treatment for Pregnant Minors, Representative Eric Hutchings
- SB65 Soliciting Gang Members Prohibited, Senator Jon Greiner

Appropriations Requests for Child and Family Services

- \$1.073 million to hire an additional 14 caseworkers, 2 supervisors and 2 support staff
- \$338,000 to keep up with increased costs of care for children in custody
- \$182,000 to operate a Family Support Center in West Valley City
- \$364,500 to assist 16 Domestic Violence Shelters statewide

There are other proposals for compensation, benefits, and discretionary pay increases that are pending also, and as soon as I have the details around these figures I will share them with you.

The Governor's Budget

You may also be interested to see what is in the Governor's Budget and you can view that at <http://www.governor.utah.gov/gopb/budgetrecommendations09.html>.

Stay Involved

Again, it doesn't mean that you have to be a legislative junky or a policy wonk to get involved. Simply knowing who your legislators are, and speaking with those legislators about the impact of bills and funding can go a long way in facilitating the process. I do need to caution you that there are significant prohibitions against using state resources to advocate for the issues that you may have. Please be involved, but you need to do it on your own time. For more information about how to contact your legislator, please visit the legislative website cited above. And if you have other questions, please feel free to send me an email.



Partnership

Advice To Adopt

By Marty Shannon, Adoption Program Manager

Every child, whether they are 3 or 17 years old, needs to have a family who is committed to their future well-being. Many sad telephone calls come to the state office in which a child's caregiving relative was receiving PSS, the courts gave the relative permanent custody and guardianship of the child, and the case is closed. The relative family was given little preparation for how to deal with future conflicts with the child's parents. When the relative later pursues adoption to clarify the child has a permanent family with them, the relative is responsible for the financial and emotional costs of pursuing the termination of the parents' rights. They have also lost any help that may have been available to them through adoption assistance, such Medicaid or financial help.

Relatives who come forward to care for children who would otherwise be in foster care need our help and support in becoming a permanent family for children who cannot safely return to their parents. When it is determined that the child should permanently live with a relative family, we need to carefully assess whether adoption instead of permanent guardianship is the best long-term option for the child. If so, before the case is closed, our assistant attorneys general should pursue the termination of the parents' rights and we should assess the child for adoption assistance. **We have a very complicated system and relative families need our help in determining the best long-term permanency options for their relative child.**

Professional Competence



Change in Child Support Laws May Impact Families Served by Child and Family Services

By Colette Mills, Federal Revenue Manager

In the 2007 legislative session, a bill was passed increasing child support guidelines in Utah law. This law goes into effect in January 2008.

This means that the amount of child support ordered for many families will be higher than amounts that would have been ordered prior to this law going into effect. This could increase an individual's child support obligation up to 25%. The law primarily pertains to new orders for child support and may have minimal impact on existing orders.

This may particularly be an issue for families we are working with towards reunification for their child, when parents have been ordered to provide child support payments for the child in foster care.

This is a reminder that there is a process in place for Child and Family Services to request waivers of child support when it would be an extreme hardship for the family and affect our ability to work towards reunification. The requirements for waivers are specified in administrative rule ([R495-879-5](#)), and the Office of Recovery Services (ORS) policy and waiver form may both be found at:

http://www.ors.utah.gov/cic_goodcause.htm.

ORS offers training to Child and Family Services' regions to explain child support for children in custody, including the criteria and process to request a waiver. Contact Frank Garcia at 801-536-0347 or fgarcia@utah.gov if you would like to schedule this training.



Our Planning Process

By The Professional Development Team

The *beginning* of a new year is a great time to *plan* and share the planning process. Just as this process is so important for the *children and families* that we serve, it is also important for our own professional development and *professional competence*.

With this in mind, let's share some thoughts on directions in professional development. First, we are looking for a foundation of professional competence that helps us to:

- Accurately assess for children's *safety*.
- Identify underlying conditions that allow family members to address their *change process* adequately.
- *Support the change process* of each family as they move toward adequate safety for their children.

There are two new training curricula that are or will be available to you to increase our ability to act in these areas.

- The *Safety Model* curriculum describes the foundational concepts of a new language for describing our practice in terms of threats of harm, child vulnerability, and protective capacities. Everyone who becomes acquainted with the model seems to start thinking and describing safety in new ways. As always, innovation in the field takes new ideas to greater heights. What ways of using the Safety Model will your team devise?
- The University of Utah, College of Social Work has offered us a new resource in the person of Dr. Brad Lundahl to develop skills in *Motivational Interviewing*. This evidence-based practice has revolutionized the field of substance abuse and is being applied in many areas, including health and youth work. We will offer a certification in Motivational Interviewing that supports you in developing your Motivational Interviewing skills, which include working with resistance and "change talk". You can explore Motivational Interviewing on the web as you prepare for the training to be implemented in your region.

We can plan for and support a family's change process as we consider the one or two critical conditions that are contributing to a lack of safety in a family, or the lack of permanency for a child, and we may look for greater understanding of the child or family's experience of attachment relationships and trauma in their history.

- The supervisors heard presentations on attachment theory and the effects of trauma on brain development at their conference in November. You will be hearing more about these foundational areas as we seek new ways to incorporate expanding knowledge into our professional competence.
- A statewide Child Welfare Institute is being planned for the fall of 2008 that will focus on the understanding of trauma for child welfare work.

Websites to explore:

- Motivational Interviewing:
 - <http://www.motivationalinterview.org>. General information about Motivational Interviewing, as well as links, research, and training resources.
 - www.casaa.unm.edu. The Center for Alcohol and Substance Abuse at the University of New Mexico is the site of much of the research and development of Motivational Interviewing.
 - www.stephenrollnick.com. Stephen Rollnick is one of the developers of motivational interviewing. His website includes a discussion board addressing topics in MI and health behavior change.
- Attachment:
 - <http://www.thelizlibrary.org/liz/attachment.html>. Attachment as a Context for Development: Challenges and Issues.
 - http://www.psychology.sunysb.edu/attachment/online/online_index.html. This site has multiple articles on child and adult attachment to explore.

- Effects of traumatic experience:
- http://aia.berkeley.edu/media/pdf/source_markoff.pdf. Integrating an Understanding of Trauma into treatment for Women with Substance Use Disorders and/or HIV.
 - http://www.childtrauma.org/ctamaterials/trau_CAMI.asp. Traumatized Children: How Childhood Trauma Influences Brain Development.



Caseworker Wish List Report

By Linda Wininger, Director of Program Improvement

Whew, Boy! Did you think you'd heard the last about the Caseworker Wish List? I bet you thought it would just be swept under the rug. Well, it hasn't been! It's taken me longer than I wanted it to but here is a little report on things that are happening in the areas you asked for help on. I'm excited to report these things to you and plan to continue reporting as we make progress. Please keep me informed as you come up with other wishes or to let me know how these changes have affected the way you work!

Child and Family Plan

Tanya Albornoz, the Permanency/Out-of-Home Services program administrator, reports that she is working with Doug Call, a SAFE information analyst, to address the concerns with the way the case plan is printing out. They presented a draft of a Child and Family Plan summary to the Region Directors. It is an abbreviated version of the plan that will be easier to read. It will pull directly from the existing Child and Family Plan tool so there will be no extra work. The summary is a quick fix with feedback from it guiding us to a permanent solution.

One of the problems with formatting on the Child and Family Plan is the computer application used to format it. We are hoping that the next release of this program will clean up the problem with a new need starting on a new page. Another reason for extra long plans is the number of steps put under each need. We are working on additional training to address how to write needs and steps.

I know that when I was first using the new child and family tool I was often frustrated. I would call Doug and ask him why this worked the way it did. He would calm me down and explain what I was doing wrong or he would say that something was broken and they were working on fixing it. It was great to be able to talk things over with Doug or Angela or other SAFE people. After talking with workers I know that some of your frustrations could be eliminated if you had more information. We are planning a session at each office where you can bring your frustrations and questions and discuss them with the experts. We are hoping that this will be a time for you to better learn how to work with the tool. We will be sending out notices of sessions after the first of the year. Write down your issues so that you can bring them to the meeting.

Foster Care Citizen Review Boards

Foster Care Citizen Review Boards (FCCRBs) were put in place to fulfill a requirement by the federal government for a 6-month administrative or court review on each foster care case. At the time, court reviews were not held every 6 months. FCCRB is in Utah State statute. A year ago the law was scheduled to “sunset”, which means that it would fade away if not renewed. The legislature chose to renew it. So, while we have court reviews that fill the federal requirement we still have FCCRB in state law. Count your blessings – they used to be held every 6 months! Currently, the FCCRB is now set to repeal (or sunset) on July 1, 2012. The program managers (especially Tanya Albornoz) are working to make the Citizen Review Boards more helpful. If you have suggestions on how this can be accomplished please send them to Tanya. A practice alert to help caseworkers understand more about FCCRBs and to clarify the process when a request comes from the FCCRB will be coming soon.

Placement Resources

In order to better tailor placement resources to case needs we need to gather more information. The Utah Foster Care Foundation (UFCF) has done targeted recruitment for some time. This has been done by region through a recruitment agreement with UFCF. In order to find the placement resources you need your region needs to compile information from each team. Please get this information to your supervisor or other region administrator so they will have it when the agreement is created.

We do want to report that the new provider module in SAFE will help in sharing information between Child and Family Services, the Office of Licensing, and the UFCF. All three partners will eventually have the ability to enter and share information regarding all families entering into the foster care process.

Another recommendation that came together through several different wishes was for contracts to be more open with evaluations of contracted agencies. There are several regions that already have “binders” available for caseworkers to look over the utilization reviews completed on our contract providers. Contact your region’s contract monitors and ask if there is a way to access not only the latest evaluation of a provider but also information of any pending or ongoing investigation. Tanya is also looking for other ways that this information can be made available to caseworkers. If you have ideas let her know.

The final area addresses kinship placements and asks for kin placements to be included in regular foster placement supports such as assigning a Resource Family Consultant (RFC) and sending them the “Foster Roster”. It also asks that employees of the division be allowed to foster children.

Some regions, such as Salt Lake Valley Region, are already including kinship placements in their foster placement supports. I would suggest that the caseworkers speak with their own region administration if they would like to put this in place in their region. Tanya will be working on practice guidelines for RFCs, and kinship placement

support will be included as one of the possible responsibilities that may be assigned to an RFC.

The Office of Licensing has an Administrative Rule [R501-12-6 (f)] that prevents Child and Family Services employees from becoming a licensed foster parent; however, there is a process in place that makes it possible for Child and Family Services employees to obtain a waiver to this rule if a situation arises where an employee has an established relationship with a child who enters out-of-home care, and the employee has an interest in becoming a licensed provider in order to provide care for that child. Practice guideline section 702 (Child and Family Services Employees As Out of Home Caregivers) outlines the process and specifies that the placement must be determined to be in the best interest of the child. In addition, practice guideline section 401.2 outlines the process that a Child and Family Services employee must follow in order to adopt a child (legally free) in Child and Family Services custody.

More Treatment Options

Jane Lewis and Tanya Albornoz are on a DSPD workgroup that is examining the issue of more appropriate services for children with developmental problems. We also have a Child and Family Services workgroup beginning to look at Respite Care issues.

We are in the process of piloting some new training for families that will have adolescents in their home. The current plan is to have the implementation of the training begin in July of 2008, in order to give us time to prepare everyone involved. The training will be required for all families that have or would like to have youth 14 and older in their home, and will be administered to the foster families through the UFCF.

Utah Foster Care Foundation

Tanya reports that the UFCF has attempted in the past to use volunteers for childcare during foster parent trainings, but has not been very successful. We will be looking at other sources for this wish. Please bear with us. We will be working on it but it may take some time. If any of you have ideas let us know so that we can pursue them.

On the issue of better screening of foster parents – This is a difficult issue and one that we have been working on for some time. Several years ago, because of this same concern, the UFCF put a pre-screening into place. This helped to some degree but we still have the problem of having some foster care applicants who just are not appropriate for foster care. It is a difficult situation and we aren't really sure what can be done except what you are already doing – identifying them as inadequate and not placing with them. If anyone has a suggestion (besides the psychological testing) please let us know.

Foster Care Training

Currently, the UFCF provides a “refresher” course for foster families of the basic training, or the foster family may enroll in the pre-service training again at any time if they feel they have that need and the UFCF has the ability to accommodate them in that

training. Foster families receive a Participant Manual from the basic training they can refer to when necessary.

RFCs are also available as well as the cluster groups, which were put in place to provide ongoing support and training for families. If you have a concern regarding a particular family needing a “refresher” on some concepts, you might contact the RFC or cluster group facilitator to get some help in meeting their needs.

All foster families receive training on the Practice Model philosophy and principles, including the value of child and family teaming in cases. If you have a problem with a specific foster family or proctor agency, we suggest working with the RFC and your supervisor to identify the needs and come up with a solution. If there is continuously a problem with specific foster families, please let your region administration know so that they can develop a plan to address this.

We are in the process of piloting some new training for families that will have adolescents in their home. The current plan is to have the implementation of the training begin in July of 2008, in order to give us time to prepare everyone involved. The training will be required for all families that have or would like to have youth 14 and older in their home, and will be administered to the foster families through the UFCF. Training regarding attachment issues is currently offered to foster parents through in-service trainings from the UFCF or in cluster group in-service trainings.

Contracts

There is a process for working with providers who are not in compliance with their contract. When the provider is out of compliance with the terms of the contract, they are placed on a corrective action plan and given the opportunity to remedy the areas out of compliance prior to taking any further action to terminate the contract. Caseworkers can learn from the regional contract unit whether or not a specific provider agency is on a corrective action plan or to report concerns regarding an agency. We hope you'll report problems so that we can get them corrected.

Foster Roster to all Placements Including Kin

The problem with providing the Foster Roster to ALL placements including kinship placements is confidentiality. We would need the kin provider's permission to give their name and address to the UFCF in order for them to get the roster. The roster is available on line at <http://www.utahfostercare.org/frnewsletter.html>. A worker can either print it out and deliver it to kinship placements when a monthly visit is made or give the website to the kin placement.

Training

Training for visitation is being developed. A purposeful visitation handbook is also being developed.

Hardware – Computers and Such

We have exciting news on this item. We are beginning a pilot project with some tablet pc's and laptops that will be given to teams of workers to see how they like them. The computers will have aircards included so that workers will have connection to SAFE and to their email. We will keep you posted on this project!

Court

We are hoping that the laptops with aircards will help with the wish for being able to do work while you wait at court as well. The laptops will allow workers to connect while they are waiting for court. We have asked about the courts providing areas for workers to access SAFE while they are waiting and have been told there is a space problem (no room for us) in the court buildings. We will keep looking for ideas on this one.

The state Court Improvement Project is working on cross training for attorneys, judges, and Child and Family Services employees. Misty Butler is the lead in developing a cross training for the court people and our people. I'm excited to see this happen. Court is one of those scary things for new workers and can be puzzling for even seasoned workers!

Administration

Recently, the state office assigned region liaisons that will be working more closely within the regions. This will allow the program managers and other state office administrators to have a better connection with the frontline and with region administration. The program managers have also been visiting teams, shadowing workers, and making other efforts in order to gather information so that their program decisions are in line with what is needed.

Incentives

One of the priority focus areas for us this year is Worker Recruitment and Retention. Incentives fall under this category and are being studied. We hope to have more to report on in this area soon.

Miscellaneous

Tanya has committed to work on the home-to-home books. There will be a workgroup on this soon!

The duffel bags are coming! So far we've had several hundred donated and more are on their way. The bags are being made by service groups across the state. A pattern for them is on our website under "Volunteers" if you have a group that would like to make them. So far there have been bags donated to Western, Salt Lake Valley, and Northern Regions that I'm aware of (here may be more that I don't know about).